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U.S. May Press Efforts to Help Latin Guerrillas

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WASHINGTON, Dec. 6 — Secretary of State George P. Shultz said today that the United States might take "further steps" on behalf of anti-Government rebels in Nicaragua.

He said the action would be in response to what he called "incontrovertible evidence" that Cuban military advisers had become increasingly involved in combat against the American-backed insurgents.

In a news conference, Mr. Shultz was not specific about these "steps." But he strongly suggested that the Administration might ask for a prompt vote by Congress for military aid to the rebels to supplement the \$27 million in so-called "humanitarian" aid now permitted by law.

In Managua, acting Foreign Minister Victor Hugo Tinoco denied that Cuban advisers were taking part in combat against the rebels and accused the Reagan Administration of seeking an excuse to expand its aid to the insurgents.

Ambassador Is Recalled

Nicaragua also announced that it was recalling its Ambassador to Washington for consultations to protest the rebel downing of a Sandinista transport helicopter Monday in which 14 people were killed. Nicaragua asserted that the aircraft been hit by a missile supplied to the insurgents by the Central Intelligence Agency.

On Thursday, Elliott Abrams, Assistant Secretary of State for Interamerican Affairs, charged that a Cuban pilot and co-pilot were among the 14 fatalities. Nicaragua denied the accusation.

A senior State Department official said the evidence that they were Cubans came from "various sources." One official said there had been intercepted radio messages, as well as a pattern of information indicating that Cubans were flying the helicopters and light reconnaissance aircraft.

Security Council Meeting Sought

A spokesman for the Nicaraguan Democratic Force, the leading rebel group, said in Washington that his group knew the pilots were Cuban because of the Cuban accents heard in the radio transmissions.

William Vigil, political counselor to the Nicaraguan Embassy, denied that any Cubans were aboard the helicopter. Mr. Vigil, speaking in Princeton,

N.J., said that "all 14 people killed were Nicaraguans and the names of all 14 are available at the embassy in Washington, D.C."

At the United Nations, a spokesman, Francois Giuliani, said Nicaragua's Mission was seeking a meeting of the Security Council to complain of increased activity by United States-supported guerrillas in the Central American nation. The session was expected early next week.

Mr. Shultz, discussing the helicopter downing, specifically denied the Nicaraguan accusation that the C.I.A. had provided the rebels with an SA-7 missile, which is believed to be the weapon used to shoot down the transport helicopter.

The rebels, Mr. Shultz asserted, had secured such missiles on their own.

Got Them 'Somehow or Other'

"Somehow or other they got hold of them," he said. "And the point is that the Soviet and Cuban presence and matériel is there and being used against the Nicaraguan people. And thank goodness that they did get hold of some weapons that can knock these choppers down, and were able to use them."

He noted that current law, while limiting American aid to food, medicine, clothing and transportation, does permit "a fast vote" if requests are made for military aid in light of a new situation in Nicaragua.

There has been renewed attention paid to the Cuban military presence in Nicaragua in the last two days because of the downing of the MI-8 helicopter and the assertions of Cuban involvement initially made by Mr. Abrams in answer to questions at a House foreign affairs subcommittee on Thursday.

Late today, asked to document the statements by Mr. Abrams and Mr. Shultz about Cuban combat involvement, the State Department issued a compendium of statements collected this year from former Sandinista soldiers. The statements asserted that Cuban advisers had been in combat for some time. One former Sandinista officer was quoted as saying that "Cuban advisers have on a number of occasions since 1982 taken an active part in combat operations against the Nicaraguan Democratic Force."

Another former officer said that he had been told by a Cuban naval adviser that "Cuban advisers had actively participated in combat with Nicaraguans against the anti-Sandinista fast boats that attacked facilities in El Bluff on the Atlantic coast." The department did not name the former Sandinista officers.

There was no indication that the Administration had initially set out to make a major issue of the Cuban involvement, because it took several hours on Thursday before other senior State Department officials even knew about Mr. Abrams's seemingly spontaneous responses. But with attention now focused on the issue, Mr. Shultz at his news conference did not shy away from making a veiled pitch for military aid for the rebels.

The news conference, in fact, was called by Mr. Shultz to give him a chance to discuss his 10-day trip to Western and Eastern Europe, which begins on Monday. His visits to Rumania, Hungary and Yugoslavia will be his first since taking office.

He said the United States and its allies have always regarded the post-war division of Europe as "artificial, unnatural and illegitimate." He said he

was seeking to improve relations with the countries of Eastern Europe.

Other Issues

In answer to questions, Mr. Shultz also made these points:

¶A team of American investigators, headed by Abraham D. Sofaer, the State Department's legal adviser, and including Justice Department and Federal Bureau of Investigation officials, will fly to Israel early next week to talk to Israeli officials involved in the espionage case of Jonathan Jay Pollard, the Navy analyst charged with spying for Israel. "We expect matters to go forward expeditiously and properly," Mr. Shultz said.

¶Efforts to make progress in Middle East peace negotiations have been "difficult" because of disagreements over which Palestinians should take part in negotiations between Jordan and Israel and over how the negotiations should be organized since Jordan continues to insist on Soviet participation and Israel will not attend until Moscow restores diplomatic relations. Mr. Shultz said Syria was a country of "key importance," even though Damascus generally opposes the Jordanian peace efforts.